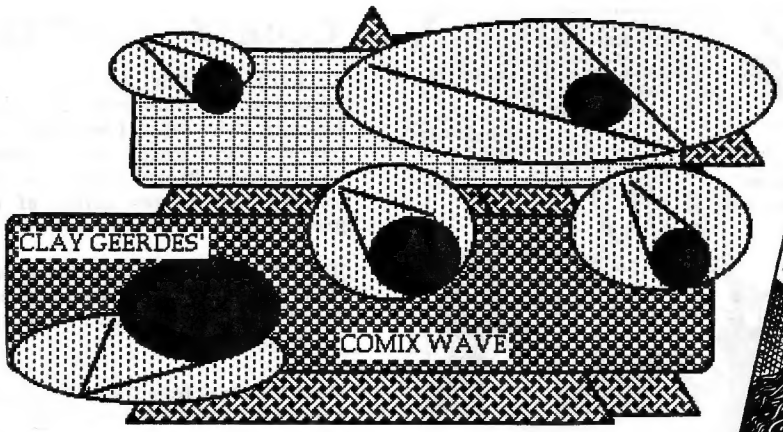

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Torchy Todd has returned. Bill Ward's naive heroine has joined the parade of yesterday's characters in a reprint series from Innovation. On the cover of the first issue is a painting by Olivia, but what puzzles me is the line *Not intended for children*. What?? I was reading Torchy stories in MODERN COMICS when I was eight years old. Along with Sheena and Matt Baker's Phantom Lady, Torchy was one of my faves. There is very little that is adult about the stories written around Torchy. From an enlightened point of view she comes across as a negative stereotype, the dumb young beauty forever doomed to be harassed and stared at by men old enough to be her grandfathers, but who looks at this kind of comic art as social realism? I never did. Bill Ward's exaggerated anatomy was always designed to over tittilate the horny adolescent boys who came across his stories in various Quality Comics during World War II. Bill was into fancy lingerie and peekaboo shots. Torchy was always climbing a ladder the way Sheena was always climbing up a tree with Bob standing innocently below looking up at her buns.

The Torchy stories are funny. One of those in the first issue could have been the outline for Goldie Hawn's movie, FOUL PLAY, but Ward probably got the idea from a thirties movie, because the dumb blonde had become a cliché by the time of Ann Sothern and only peaked in the early sixties with the deaths of Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. Today's blondes are seldom dumb on or off screen. Think of Kathleen Turner, Glenn Close, or Kim Bassinger. No Torchys here.

The Torchy came from torch singer, a thirties synonym for a hot number. If you liked someone back then, you *carried a torch* for her. I'm sure today's younger reader will find the language used in TORCHY more than a little quaint.

Be nice to see some new Torchy stories. Maybe some What Ifs. What if Torchy had been a punk rock singer? Be fun to see Kim Bassinger play her on screen. I've been a fan of hers since MY STEPMOTHER IS AN ALIEN.

I'LL ARRANGE FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, MY DEAR! BUT PERHAPS YOU'LL PERMIT ME TO MAKE A MORE COMPLETE STUDY OF YOUR PERSONALITY, SOME SATURDAY NIGHT!
THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!

NOW, YOUNG LADY, WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE? I'M HERE TO HELP YOU!
THEY WERE NEXT DOOR AND I HEARD THEM THROUGH THE WALL!
PRETTY FAR GONE, EH, DOC? AND SUCH A LOOKER, TOO...
I CAN'T SAY YET! I MUST SUBJECT HER TO FURTHER... AHEM... SCRUTINY!

COMIX PLUGOLA

More really psychotic stuff in the second issue of RAT FINK. Ric Sloane, Jeff Gaither, and John Garcia worked on the art. $3.25 by mail from World of Fandom, 2525 W. Knollwood St. Tampa, FL 33614-4334.

Guy Colwell is continuing the story of DOLL. #5 is out. $4 pp from Rip Off Press, POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604. It's adults only so tell the Todds you're over 21.

Greg Irons used to tell me that art should stand on its own, but when you get to know the artist that never works. It does to a certain extent when you know nothing about the artist, but we don't live in that kind of situation. Hey, people like Crumb who claim to hate interviews are interviewed all over the place. I must have two dozen different interviews between Crumb and different people in my files. So there is Crumb and there is his art and now in the sixth volume of his collected works there is Crumb the gossip telling stories about his early sex life so we have Crumb the man and Crumb's art and Crumb's gossip about the women who inspired that art and there are still people who write and ask what kind of man is Robert Crumb anyway. Hell, I don't know. It's all make believe anyway. We invent ourselves from day to day and spend a lot of time defending our inventions. At 48, Crumb is talking more about what he was than what he is and being in the public eye makes him dwell on the evanescence of it all more than the rest of us who often get through whole months without being asked to justify anything more than the few pounds we have gained or lost.

Students of human unhappiness as different from one another as J. P. Morgan and Voltaire understood that the comfort of the rich requires an abundant supply of the poor. Without the goads and spurs of poverty, who would clean the toilets in California, or carry the golf clubs at Burning Tree, or enlist in President Bush's armies?

–Lewis Lapham, HARPER'S

THE NAKED AND THE NUDE

I was really shocked to learn about the nude relays held secretly at the University of Florida campus in Gainesville on Easter Sunday of this year. On the other hand, now I know where all of the streakers have gone. Streaking was faddist for awhile in the pre-Yuppie seventies. Actually, it got to be almost obligatory. At a party held at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco to celebrate the opening of the erotic film THE DEVIL IN MS. JONES, none other than networker Jerry Rubin and newave cartoonist Roger May streaked the party. It was Robert Opel's steak of the Academy Awards that got the whole fad started. The Florida nude relays followed a post-game party held for the 48th annual Florida Relays. About 45 naked runners participated in the 2:30 a.m. race and the event came to an end when someone turned on the lights at the Percy Beard Track. Runners of both sexes ran a 1,600 meter relay and no one was busted.

I like the idea of THE WORLD'S WORST COMICS AWARDS, but.

I always have to put my two cents in, right? How come all of the AWARDS went to straight comics and none to undergrounds like OK and DIRTBALL and BAREFOOTZ, books published by the same company that ran the two WORST COMICS issues? Nothing in the underground or newave that deserves honorable mention as dreadful stuff? Maybe Schumeister and Larsen will move on to some of the more deserving stuff in a future issue. I dunno, there's just something a bit ONE-SIDED when a company comes out with TWO comic books that are critical of the medium but only as that medium has been used by OTHER companies. C.G.

AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF EXPOSED FLESH, NOT TOO MANY DARE MORE OF IT THAN NEKRA AND ECSTACY.
WHEN IT'S A CHOICE BETWEEN PROTECTION AND PANDERING TO THE LIBIDOS OF MALE READERS, WE KNOW WHICH WINS OUT.
FAT LOT YOU KNOW!
THESE CLOTHES OFFER THE BEST PROTECTION OF ALL!
NEKRA TM MARVEL ENT. GROUP, INC.

UH... JEAN-PAUL, WHY AM I WEARING THIS COSTUME?
WELL, BESIDES BEING A CHEAP DEVICE TO PLAY ON THE HORMONES OF THE PUBESCENT TYPES WHO'RE THUMBING THROUGH THIS AT THE NEWSSTAND, IT SERVES AS A LEAD-IN FOR OUR FIRST CATEGORY: WORST COSTUME.
TAKE IT AWAY, ROBERT!

I had two sex idols--Dick Tracy and Popeye. My mother caught me one day playing with myself and looking at a Popeye cartoon.

--Andy Warhol.

The Velvet Underground has a moment of peculiar triumph when it plays at the Delmonico Hotel for the annual dinner of the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry. Dr. Robert Campbell, chairman of the dinner and director of the psychiatric unit at St. Vincent's Hospital, has invited Andy [Warhol] and the Underground to give some shock treatment to the 175 well-dressed shrinks and their perfumed, carefully coiffed wives. Over roast beef, the doctors are bombarded by the decibels of three fire engines and blinded by stun-gun lights. Gerard does his whip dance. Edie [Sedgwick] shakes her butt. Four Freudians and one Jungian walk out, needing first aid for their eyes and ears. One Fifth Avenue practitioner regurgitates his roast beef, and several analysts are heard making appointments with each other for the next day.

Ultra Violet

FAMOUS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.

That's Jerry Garcia on the cover of BUZZARD 3 with all those weird cats. Steve Lafler's art is snappy in this issue, but the book contains a lot of really down stuff. Lots of negative imagery. $3.50 by mail from Cat-Head Comics, POB 576, Hudson, MA 01749.

COMIX PLUGOLA

To keep up with the work of Clark Dissmeyer, send him an SASE at Box 1531, Kearney, Nebr. 68848. I loved the story of Luther Scum, Hardcore Atheist Detective, and Clark's Propaganda War drives another nail in the coffin of media prevarication.

JIM JAM is a buck from Jim Siergey, 4135 N. Hermitage, Chicago, IL 60613. Watch for Jim's CULTURAL JETLAG 1. It's a jam with Jim Ryan.

HEALTH 3 is $2 from David Tompkins, 207 Avenue B, #2-A, NY, NY 10009. Some grossly funny stuff. Henry Miller is quoted on the back. Nice slick cover. These guys know a printer.

..the difference between now and the "underground press" of the sixties is that it is so cheap to publish a newsletter on a personal computer that you can actually get your ravings distributed and read without having an actual job.

--Joe Bob Briggs

[Joe Bob's contribution to our print junkie-ism is WE ARE THE WEIRD. Sample for a couple of bucks from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.]

And speaking of DALLAS, after 16 years of the glorification of the Texas rich and their sinful lives, that prime time sitcom is going to the old video graveyard this May. How will it end--an invasion by Iraqi terrorists armed with Israeli uzis blowing up the Ewing building? Old J.R. castrated and stuffed and hung up as one more tourist attraction for the gore freaks who make their annual trek to the Kennedy shrine in Dealey Plaza?

Have I plugged Ace Backwards lately? I'm still waiting for Ace to write the definitive version of the People's Park war. LOOMPANICS UNLIMITED has published a collection of Ace's strips in a nice perfect bound edition. Just the gift for your parents on their next anniversary. It's $15.95 pp from POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

BAY CON '91 is coming up on May 24-27 at the Red Lion Inn in San Jose, Ca. Info from POB 70393, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.

I can't really define this damned thing. I just go on writing. My newsletter is kind of a public version of my scrapbook. I find all these weird things here and there and pass them along to further stir up the reader's imagination. It all started on an old Remington portable typewriter I bought at the Emporium on Market Street in San Francisco, an old blue workhorse that got me through hundreds of college papers and examinations. From there I went to an IBM selectric, then to an office standard, and, after a couple of years using a Canon Typestar 7, I learned to use a MacIntosh and that's why your CW looks the way it does today. I'm still into platters and cassettes, and have not switched to CD's so I am out of phase with most of the college people I meet. I have Beta and VHS, but I tape less and watch less these days. I'm trying to get a few books formatted and will probably desktop publish them myself.